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ABSTRACT

This study assesses the extent to which student services within California's community colleges assist students in maneuvering through challenge, and to see whether student services programs nurture students' personal and emotional development. Using Chickering and Reisser's theory of student development, this study asked students to rate the quality of student services - including admissions, orientation, counseling, and assessment examinations -- on their campus, and analyzed how thoroughly student services are structured to address each stage of development as posed by Chickering and Reisser. A five-page survey was distributed at the beginning and again at the end of classes at 10 community colleges to provide longitudinal information. Results are presented by race, gender, and social status (defined as number of books in the home) for each of the four services. Based on the results, the paper recommends four strategies to help improve matriculation services: (1) reevaluate the college's mission statement; (2) create a student self-assessment tool; (3) distribute complete campus information in writing early in the matriculation process; and (4) provide annual training for matriculation personnel. Contains 19 references. (JJL)

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Applying Theory to Practice: Incorporating Principles of Student Development to Quality Student Services in California Community Colleges

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Introduction

Community colleges affect the future of individuals who come in contact with them. The people who offer assistance and guidance to students in community colleges have the important task of providing students with information about academic requirements, course selection, vocational and academic options, and rules regarding transfer to four-year institutions. Even such rudimentary information as the location of buildings does not escape the broad range assistance that student affairs personnel may offer a student. The degree to which student services within community colleges is succeeding in helping students acclimate to new and unfamiliar surroundings is the subject of much research and debate.

Currently, all California Community Colleges offer "matriculation" services to new students. These services include assistance with admissions and registration, orientation, counseling and advising, and assessment testing. The State of California and the Board of Governors of the California Community College system envisioned that these "matriculation" services would help provide equitable access to educational programs for all students enrolled in community colleges, would assist students in maximizing the benefits of a successful college career, and would help students adjust to their new college environment. Student service personnel are in the position to help instill a sense of belonging and purpose within each new student, with the ultimate goal of helping them fulfill their maximum educational potential.

The purpose of this project was to assess the extent to which student services within California's community colleges assist students in maneuvering through college, and to see whether student services programs nurture students' personal and emotional development. Using

Chickering and Reisser's theory of student development (1993), this study asked students to rate the quality of student services on their campus, and analyzed how thoroughly student services are structured to address each stage of development as posed by Chickering and Reisser. Suggestions for improving student services based upon student development theory were included.

This study addressed four key questions:

- To what extent do new community college students perceive the matriculation at their campuses to be helpful?
- Do matriculation services at these colleges encourage students to progress along Chickering and Reisser's seven vectors of development?
- Is any one vector receiving more attention than others in matriculation programming?
- How can matriculation programs be improved or augmented in order to help students' progress along the normal path of personal and academic development?

Review of Literature

The literature regarding the utility of student development theory in student services programs highlights three key issues: the role and function of student services, the role of community colleges, and the challenges inherent in implementing theory to practice. This review of literature provides a discussion of these issues.

A history of student services. Perhaps Banna, Haws and Knefelkamp said it best when they wrote, "American higher education has a history of being both responsive to the needs of the society it serves and reflective of the changing nature of that society" (1978, p. 107). America's earliest colleges and universities admitted the sons of only the wealthiest, most well-to-do families. Tuition was high, enrollment was limited, and young men were prepared for positions of community leadership in law, medicine and theology (Banna, Haws and Knefelkamp, 1978). Women and ethnic minorities, of course, were excluded entirely from this sort of educational experience, as educators saw no need to prime them for roles of societal leadership.

The concept of *in loco parentis* provided the framework upon which early colonial student services were offered. Adults assuming positions of student service leadership were responsible for the safety of students under their care (Hurst, 1980; Leach, 1989; O'Banion, 1989; Miller, 1982; Hanson, 1989; Chickering and Reisser, 1993). Eventually these stringent rules grew burdensome. Hurst (1980) noted that the concept of *in loco parentis* controlled students, but did not contribute anything to "an understanding about the difference between good and bad parents. It said little about what helps people to learn and mature" (p. 152). The changing political and social climate on campuses in the 1960s and 1970s prompted student services practitioners to recognized the importance of guiding students towards a positive transition to adulthood, rather than acting simply as disciplinarians (Garland, 1985).

The role of the community college. Coupled with the challenge of providing quality services to students, those who work in and attend community colleges know that the utility and quality of their schools will always be subject to scrutiny. Two-year college administrators and faculty recognize their precarious placement within the system of higher education, as it is within their campus environments that the majority of ethnic minority students experience their first, and perhaps only taste of postsecondary education. Ethnic minority students enroll in community colleges more frequently than in four-year colleges and universities (Rendón and Matthews, 1989). In addition, community college students run a higher risk of not completing their college education than students enrolled in four-year institutions.

Applying theory to practice in student services. Since the 1960s and 1970s, scholars looking at the role and function of student services in both two- and four-year colleges have acknowledged the need for a more comprehensive approach to student service's structure. In January of 1990, the *Journal of College Student Development* published the "1989 Statement of Ethical Principles and Standards" for the American College Personnel Association. These guidelines were published to "provide direction...in examining the ethical implications of student services" (Hotelling, 1990, p. 10). Guided by principles that sought to encourage the overall personal, academic and developmental growth of students, the statement provided student personnel administrators with a stronger sense of purpose. The following year, Pascarella and Terenzini (1991) explored the emergence of student development theories, noting these theories were developed to explain students' needs at different stages of their emotional and academic development. They stated that scholars mapped students' development to show how colleges could adjust their programs or policies to meet the needs of both the students and the colleges.

To what extent, however, can colleges adjust their programs successfully? Do administrators know whether or not they have actually addressed students' real concerns? Current literature suggests these professionals lack this knowledge, caused in part by the fact that they are not familiar with theories of student development and their utility within student services programming. Strange and Contomanolis (1983), for example, surveyed students in nineteen graduate-level student affairs programs in the United States, and found that while development theories were studied, more than 50% of the respondents had *not* studied even half of these theories in educational literature. Of concern, too, is that the limited understanding of student development theory is perpetuated once these graduate students take jobs as student affairs practitioners. Welch (1986) noted that many chief administrators in colleges and universities are unfamiliar with the role student services officers play in the college setting (p. 11). Roth (1986) looked at how administrators view the purpose of student services, and found "administrators' responses indicate a great deal of ambiguity towards student development..." (p. 19).

It is important, then, for student affairs professionals at community colleges to assist students with academic planning, and to provide educational and personal support so that students' may achieve their defined goals. Of course, the use of developmental definitions and theories can be troublesome. Rodgers (1980) noted inherent problems that occur when attempting to structure student services programs around development theories. He stated that if a theory is "too general" it might be of little value. In addition, because development takes place over an extended period of time, it can be difficult to describe how such changes occur or how they can be influence by student services programs.

Seven vectors of student development. One of the more prominent student development theories was defined by Arthur Chickering (1969). In 1969, and again in 1993, Chickering (with

collaborator Linda Reisser) published what is still considered today as the most important explanation of the stages through which students in both colleges and universities develop during their academic years. In their theory, Chickering and Reisser outline seven clearly identifiable stages, or "vectors" of development which occur during the college years. The seven vectors are:

1. **Developing Competence**. Students must achieve three types of competence: intellectual, physical and interpersonal.
2. **Managing Emotions**. Students should be able to understand and control their feelings of frustration, anger, boredom and fear.
3. **Moving through Autonomy toward Interdependence**. A student learns how to become more self-reliant and self-sufficient, and takes responsibility for his actions and decision.
4. **Developing Mature Interpersonal Relationships**. At this stage, a student is able to respect and tolerate the differences between people, is better able to achieve intimacy with others, and gains an appreciation for the cultural and personal differences of others.
5. **Establishing Identity**. When a student establishes identity, he becomes comfortable with his body and is at ease with respective sexual orientation and gender. The student gains a greater sense of self in a social, cultural and historical context.
6. **Developing Purpose**. At this stage, a student is comfortable mapping out their objectives.
7. **Developing Integrity**. Students can internalize their values and beliefs, and use them in order to interpret their personal experiences, guide their daily behavior and maintain self respect.

Significance of student development theory to this study. Some scholars believe Chickering and Reisser failed to describe the process through which students develop (Straub, 1987), and did not clarify how men and women differ in their progress through the seven vectors (Straub, 1987; Gilligan, 1982) Given that many other studies present contradictory findings about the

developmental progress of women versus men (Greeley and Tinsley, 1988), though, it cannot necessarily be concluded that Chickering and Reisser's work is inappropriate when considering the quality of student services. As this particular study was designed to assess students' development in community colleges, these discrepancies were of little concern. What was important was investigating whether the tasks necessary for students to progress through each of the seven vectors are being responded to within current student services programs. Chickering and Reisser's theory of student development parallels the thinking of scholars who encourage the implementation of student development principles into student services programs. As Chickering and Reisser stated, "student development should be the organizing purpose for higher education...community and four-year institutions can have significant impact on student development along the majors vectors addressed" (1993, p. 265).

This literature review has highlighted issues that affect effective student services programming in community colleges. Missing, however, is an understanding of how student affairs practitioners within community colleges have studied how student services could differentially benefit or affect students, implement principles of student development into a student services program, and assess the effectiveness of such programs based on the goals of nurturing students' emotional and personal growth. This project sought to discover the extent to which student service programs within community college campuses are helping students to grow, one "vector" at a time.

Methodology

A five-page survey was developed to analyze the degree to which student services programs helped students progress through the seven vectors of development. The surveys were given to Orientation, College Success and Introduction to College classes at ten California Community

Colleges during the first or second class meeting of the fall semester, and again between the seventh and ninth week of classes. This longitudinal study was conducted to see whether students' perception of student services would change over the course of the semester, and to see whether students who withdrew before the second survey had different opinions than students who stayed in school throughout the study. To ensure that all students in each class participated and completed the research tool, the researcher personally gave the surveys to students in each of the twenty-five participating classrooms.

Statistical Analysis. Students' responses to the questions within the survey instrument were analyzed to answer specifically the four questions addressed within this study. This is done in two ways. First, mean scores were tabulated to measure students' satisfaction with the four student services. Second, to determine whether there were any *significant* differences between students' mean scores based on their gender, ethnicity and social status, tests of analysis of variance (ANOVA) were conducted. Given that ANOVA, however, does not indicate *which* means are significantly different, the Boneferroni test – using a modified T-test to calculate a single significant difference for all treatments analyzed by ANOVA – was conducted to identify those treatments that were significantly different.

Results

To gain a clearer perspective about students' perceptions of services available at all the colleges, mean (x) scores were calculated. Table 1 provides demographic characteristics of all students who participated in this study.

Table 1. Demographic Characteristics of Students in All Ten Colleges: Persisting Students, First & Second Surveys, and Withdrawing Students, First Survey

	Survey 1		Survey 2		Withdrew	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
GENDER						
Men	208	42%	208	42%	142	49%
Women	286	57	286	57	124	43
No Response	1	1	1	1	21	8
Total	495	100	495	100	288	100
ETHNIC IDENTITY						
African American	40	8%	40	8%	29	10%
Asian	19	4	19	4	14	5
Hispanic	162	33	162	33	60	21
Native American	7	1	7	1	5	2
Pacific Islander	3	1	3	1	1	0
White	244	49	244	49	137	47
Other/No Response	20	4	20	4	42	15
Total	495	100	495	100	288	100
SOCIAL STATUS						
1-10 Books	42	9%	42	9%	28	10%
11-25 Books	80	16	80	16	41	14
26-100 Books	164	33	164	33	94	33
101-200 Books	100	20	100	20	44	15
200+ Books	100	20	100	20	55	19
Other/No Response	9	2	9	2	26	9
Total	495	100	495	100	288	100

The data in Table 1 show the number males, females and ethnic groups were about equal between persisting and withdrawing students. Overall more female, White and Hispanic students participated in the study. Table 2 provides a summary of the scores students gave to each services provided in their colleges' matriculation program.

Table 2. Mean Scores and Participation Rates, by Gender, Ethnicity, and Social Class

	ADMISSIONS		ORIENTATION		COUNSELING		EXAMS	
	X	%	X	%	X	%	X	%
FIRST ROUND: PERSISTERS								
Men	3.28	71.0	3.48	61.0	3.25	63.0	3.48	85.0
Women	3.30	69.0	3.50	69.0	3.26	72.0	3.74	83.0
African American	3.33	71.0	3.59	66.0	3.21	63.0	3.67	87.0
Asian	3.37	76.0	3.37	71.0	2.97	81.0	3.90	86.0
Hispanic	3.33	68.0	3.61	66.0	3.36	66.0	3.66	86.0
Native American	3.41	89.0	3.63	56.0	3.40	78.0	3.81	89.0
Pacific Islander	2.83	100.0	2.33	67.0	2.38	67.0	3.33	67.0
White	3.25	67.0	3.42	66.0	2.34	68.0	3.58	82.0
1-10 Books	3.31	78.0	3.66	64.0	3.34	76.0	3.86	87.0
11-25 Books	3.40	67.0	3.56	63.0	3.29	68.0	3.64	83.0
26-100 Books	3.17	69.0	3.50	66.0	3.30	71.0	3.67	80.0
101-200 Books	3.38	74.0	3.43	64.0	3.14	66.0	3.59	86.0
200+ Books	3.30	61.0	3.34	71.0	3.20	65.0	3.47	88.0
SECOND ROUND: PERSISTERS								
Men	3.30	65.0	3.51	62.0	3.31	60.0	3.43	85.0
Women	3.29	62.0	3.48	74.0	2.29	71.0	3.70	83.0
African American	3.48	63.0	3.56	53.0	3.09	69.0	3.60	75.0
Asian	3.10	68.0	3.39	64.0	3.08	71.0	3.37	93.0
Hispanic	3.40	62.0	3.61	71.0	3.50	64.0	3.67	87.0
Native American	3.56	67.0	3.52	83.0	3.96	83.0	3.94	100.0
Pacific Islander	3.53	80.0	3.63	40.0	2.80	60.0	2.83	40.0
White	3.22	63.0	3.42	70.0	3.21	68.0	3.54	83.0
1-10 Books	3.34	66.0	3.55	80.0	3.46	84.0	3.64	89.0
11-25 Books	3.38	69.0	3.66	60.0	3.22	69.0	3.76	82.0
26-100 Books	3.25	64.0	3.46	64.0	3.26	67.0	3.52	81.0
101-200 Books	3.20	62.0	3.48	71.0	3.37	60.0	3.59	85.0
200+ Books	3.36	60.0	3.40	66.0	3.18	66.0	3.47	85.0
WITHDRAWING STUDENTS								
Men	3.15	77.0	3.30	67.0	2.95	71.0	3.37	79.0
Women	3.14	72.0	3.29	79.0	3.01	81.0	3.52	89.0
African American	2.95	74.0	3.53	55.0	2.93	74.0	3.39	61.0
Asian	2.95	67.0	3.23	81.0	2.76	86.0	3.07	86.0
Hispanic	3.17	74.0	3.31	87.0	3.05	84.0	3.55	86.0
Native American	3.09	67.0	3.18	100.0	2.24	50.0	3.19	100.0
Pacific Islander	3.63	100.0	0	n/a	3.67	100.0	4.33	100.0
White	3.18	76.0	3.27	68.0	2.30	75.0	3.49	88.0
1-10 Books	3.16	92.0	3.32	76.0	3.02	90.0	3.54	87.0
11-25 Books	3.30	85.0	3.59	89.0	3.16	85.0	3.62	85.0
26-100 Books	3.12	73.0	3.22	72.0	2.90	80.0	3.43	82.0
101-200	3.01	68.0	3.25	71.0	2.86	64.0	3.20	86.0
200+	3.22	66.0	3.22	6.0	3.05	65.0	3.59	87.0

Admissions and Registration. Among both persisting and withdrawing students in this study, over half the students in each student group received assistance from admissions and registration staff (Table 2). Mean scores that gage students' satisfaction with the help they received differed very little among persisting students in the first and second surveys. African American, Hispanic and Native American students all reported increased mean satisfaction scores, perhaps attesting to an improved perception of the quality of these services. In addition, students of lower, middle and upper class social status also reported slight increases in their mean satisfaction scores. Among withdrawing students, only Native Americans reported higher mean satisfaction scores than did persisting students. Among all students, 64% of persisters said *counselors* most often provided registration assistance. For students who did not receive assistance, a large number said they simply did not *need* any assistance. An encouraging finding was that very few students indicated that staff members were unhelpful.

Orientation. Over half of all students said they attended orientation; Pacific Islander persisting students, however, were less likely to state this in the second survey (40%). Mean satisfaction scores for Orientation increased for male, Asian, Hispanic and Pacific Islander students. In fact, Pacific Islander students' increased their mean score from 2.333 to 3.666 -- well over one point. Mean scores for withdrawing students were, typically, lower than for persisting students. When asked why they did not attend orientation, non-participants frequently said that they *did not know* about orientation. All Native American and Pacific Islander persisters in the first survey stated that they did not know orientation was available. While these numbers decreased by the second survey, this large number may be cause for alarm.

Counseling. At least half of all students stated that they had met with a member of the counseling staff at their college. Usually students met with a counselor one to three times. Many

students gave improved satisfaction scores for counseling between the first and second survey. Students had a variety reasons for not meeting with counselors. The percentages of students who did not see a counselor are somewhat small across all colleges, yet are large enough to illustrate that greater attention should be given to improve this particular student service.

Assessment Exams. Students who were the least likely to take required assessment exams upon enrolling in college were Pacific Islander persisting students. Only 40% of these students in the second survey stated that they had taken such tests. For all other students, the rate of participation was over 60%. Withdrawing Pacific Islander students, despite their lower rates of participation, gave a mean satisfaction score of 4.333, two points higher than that given by persisting students of the same identification. Students who did not take an assessment exam frequently stated they did not know the tests were required.

Analysis of Variance. Tests of analysis of variance (at the .25 percent confidence level) revealed the following significantly different mean scores.

- A critical difference of .24 indicated that on the whole, men (3.48) had a significantly lower opinion about the quality of the assessment exams than did women (3.74).
- A critical difference was .26, and illustrated that male persisters (3.43) gave a significantly lower score for assessment exams than did female persisters (3.70).
- When looking at scores for orientation, a critical difference of .16 between withdrawing and persisting students indicated that withdrawing students (3.29) had a significantly lower opinion of the quality of *orientation* than did persisting students (3.48 and 3.49).
- The overall scores for *counseling services* also differed significantly between persisting and withdrawing students. A critical difference of .19 indicated that withdrawing students (2.97)

had a significantly lower opinion of the quality of counseling services than did persisting students (3.25 and 3.30).

- A critical difference of .18 indicated that overall mean scores for assessment exams (3.58) and orientation programs (3.49) were significantly higher for both counseling services (3.30) and admissions and registration services (3.29).
- A critical difference of .21 suggests that withdrawing students' scores for assessment exams (3.46) were significantly higher than the scores for admissions and registration services (3.14) and counseling services (2.97). This assumes withdrawing students had a higher opinion of the utility of assessment exams.

The influence of student development. Overall mean averages of each vector's influence were calculated. Table 3 illustrates the strength of each of Chickering and Reisser's seven vectors throughout all colleges as a whole.

Table 3. Prevalence of Vector Influence Within Student Services at All Colleges

VECTOR	1st Round: Persisters	2nd Round: Persisters	Withdrew
1: Developing Competence	3.36	3.38	3.15
2: Managing Emotions	3.65	3.65	3.42
3: Autonomy toward Independence	3.19	3.24	2.91
4: Developing Mature Relationships	3.19	3.23	3.06
5: Establishing Identity	3.08	2.78	3.10
6: Developing Purpose	3.36	3.32	3.06
7: Developing Integrity	3.54	3.54	3.33

On the average, an increase in the overall mean score of each vector's presence within student services programs increased for three vectors: Developing Competence, Achieving Autonomy and Mature Relationships. For the stages of Managing Emotions and Developing Integrity, mean values remained constant between the first and second surveys completed by

persisting students. And two vectors' scores decreased – Establishing Identity and Developing Purpose. The amalgamated average scores also illustrate that withdrawing students responses indicate lower vector influence.

When the values for each vector were averaged across all ten colleges, changes in scores were minimal. This could indicate that while student services programs may be more amenable to some vectors, all student services programs could benefit from a closer implementation and incorporation of student development theory. To address whether any of the seven vectors were receiving more attention within matriculation programs, tests of analysis of variance were conducted to compare the mean scores provided by all students. Persisting students' responses in the first survey indicated that Vector 2 (Managing Emotions) was more present in matriculation programs than Vector 3 (Developing Autonomy), Vector 4 (Establishing Identity), Vector 5 (Freeing Interpersonal Relationships) and Vector 6 (Developing Purpose). In addition, Vector 7 (Developing Integrity) was more incorporated into programs than were Vector 1 and Vectors 3-6.

Persisting students' responses in the second survey indicate that significant differences occurred between at least two vectors (critical difference = .19). Mean scores in Table 6 indicate that Vector 2 was slightly more present in matriculation programs than were Vector 1 and Vectors 3 through 6. Again, Vector 7 showed more influence as its mean score was significantly higher than mean scores for Vectors 3 through 6.

Withdrawing students' scores indicated that at least two mean scores for vectors were significantly different. Vectors 2 and 7 exhibited the most influence across all colleges in this study. With a critical difference of .22, Vector 2 was significantly greater than mean scores for Vector 1 and for Vectors 3 through 6. And the mean score for Vector 7 was significantly greater than mean scores for Vectors 3 through 6.

Recommendations

From the information gathered from the students in this study, student services in ten of California's community colleges are providing students with assistance and guidance. Problems remain, however, within the structure of student services at these college campuses. Students' answers on the survey instrument highlight many weaknesses currently in place within student services:

- A lack of organization and communication between administrative departments;
- Personnel's lack of knowledge about college procedures and Matriculation protocol;
- A sense of indifference on the part of personnel and counselors;
- Counselors' lack of knowledge about academic regulations and policies, and requirements for certain educational disciplines;
- A void of information about campus activities, organizations, clubs and support groups;
- Neglect in informing students about academic services on campus, including counseling, tutoring, orientation, workshops and academic facilities, including libraries;
- A lack of adequate time for counseling personnel to cover all material information with students and to individualize their encounters with students to provide more personalized guidance.

Gaps in the information create frustration when students first enroll in college. The concern is that if a student is met with organizational and academic obstacles, students are likely leave school. To avoid this, it is necessary to investigate how student services programs may be improved in order to enhance enrollment, decrease attrition, and provide for a well rounded program so that students not only meet their own academic goals, but also develop positively.

This project addressed how a model of student development theory may play a role in the redesign of student services programs in the State of California. There are those who may argue that the college campus, especially the community college, was not created with student development in mind. Faced with a jaded student body whose students often lack the support and personal motivation to achieve early academic goals, however, colleges should strive to create an academic environment that encourages students to work hard and enjoy personal growth.

Chickering and Reisser's model for student development is appropriate for the consideration and implementation by student affairs professionals. Research should now direct itself toward investigating how principles student development could improve the educational experiences of in community colleges. The results of this study prompted the recommendation of four (4) key strategies that can be implemented at community colleges to help improve how matriculation services are offered, and to help colleges integrate an understanding of student development principles into college-wide planning.

1. Review the Mission Statement. The study's results speak to the need for colleges to evaluate closely their mission statements, and reformat it to include the goals of nurturing, guiding and providing support for students' goals and academic directions. These documented goals must be specific, and the mission statement discuss the importance of a supportive and encouraging academic community where all members are held responsible for providing the tools and guidance necessary for the achievement of students' academic endeavors.

2. Create a Student Self-Assessment Tool. One of the primary concerns that students reported in their comments was the limited time they had to meet with an advisor, their inability to communicate their educational goals, and their advisor's inability to help them create an academic plan tailored to their needs. It is suggested that colleges create an informational

questionnaire that can be given to students prior to their meeting with a counselor. When a student is scheduled for a counseling appointment, he or she should be instructed to arrive 15 minutes prior to the appointed time so he can complete a Student Personal Inventory form. This self-assessment tool would provide the counselor with a clearer understanding of students' academic preferences. It would help both the counselor and student to focus quickly on the student's needs and goals, and would provide the student an opportunity to reflect upon his goals for their college career before engaging in conversation with a counselor. A more effective academic programming could be created from this assessment tool.

3. Distribute Complete Campus Information. The early stages of the matriculation process must be shaped in such a way that students are completely aware of all steps within matriculation that they must complete. Many students, as discussed in Chapter Four, were unaware that orientation, assessment exams, and counseling services were available. Rather than providing students with *verbal* instructions, students should receive a *written* sheet of instructions that details the college's matriculation process. When students are aware of registration protocol, they will be less likely to miss important information that is vital to their early weeks in college.

4. Provide Annual Training for Matriculation Personnel. Another concern expressed by students was lack of quality customer service. Many students related personal accounts of rude treatment, indifference and hostility directed towards them by counselors and staff members. In the private sector, many employers are strongly encouraging and financially supporting employees to attend one-day conferences for continuing education in the areas of management and communication skills. These classes are structured to assist people in entry-level, mid-level and managerial positions to improve their interpersonal interactions with fellow co-workers, clients and customers.

Students' comments lend evidence that personnel in all sectors of student affairs would benefit from continuing education in this format. A mandatory, one-day seminar for all staff and counselors in student affairs should be implemented bi-annually in order to assist employees of these colleges to develop good communication skills, to handle different work-related situations, and to understand how to help students of different ages, backgrounds and domestic situations. In addition to professional development opportunities, the personnel responsible for providing this information to students must be extremely knowledgeable about the information they are giving. Because many students at the ten colleges said that counselors and staff members often did not know much about matriculation and enrollment requirements, counselors and student affairs personnel should complete an annual in-service training to familiarize themselves about campus policies, academic regulations and all requirements under the matriculation program.

Conclusions

Currently, research into the quality of student services and their delivery within the system of postsecondary education is limited. Literature has not compared thoroughly the extent to which student services may differentially benefit or affect students. Colleges have not implemented a student development model into a student services program, and most colleges have not assessed the effectiveness of such programs based on the goals of encouraging students' emotional and intellectual growth. Community college administrators may be slow to restructure and reevaluate the existing format of student services programming, but it is imperative that they do so. Given the current limitations inherent in contemporary assessments of student services within California community colleges, the information gathered in the body of this study provides for an appropriate opportunity to take a critical view of how well students are fundamentally served.

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